

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0463

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PORG, IZ, ECOSOC

SUBJ: IRAQI ATTITUDE ON INTERNATIONAL

HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS AND UNITED NATIONS

REF: (A) STATE 16347, (B) BAGHDAD A8

1. WITH POLOFF I CALLED ON ISMAT KETTANEH, CHIEF OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AT MFA, TO DISCUSS LAST UNGA SESSION AND IRAQ'S INTEREST IN OBTAINING SEAT ON HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE OF ECOSOC (REF B). KETTANEH, WHO IS A FORMER IRAQI REPRESENTATIVE ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION AND WHO SERVED IN IRAQI DELEGATION AT 32ND UNGA, WAS NOT ENCOURAGING ABOUT IRAQI INTEREST IN INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS.

2. KETTANEH SAID THAT IRAQ WOULD CONTINUE TO OPPOSE EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (PARA 9 OF REF A). HE GROUPED IRAQ WITH OTHER COUNTRIES WISHING FOR REASONS OF SOVEREIGNTY TO AVOID SITUATIONS WHERE INDIVIDUAL COMPLAINANTS COULD ENLIST AID OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. HE FRANKLY ACKNOWLEDGED
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IRAQI DESIRE TO FOCUS U.N. EMPHASIS ON COLLECTIVE RIGHTS RATHER THAN INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS. HE NOTED THAT "WHEN USG RAN THE U.N.", EMPHASIS ON INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS WAS CENTRAL CONCERN AND IMPLIED IT WAS NOW TURN OF THIRD WORLD TO HANDLE MATTERS ITS WAY.

3. IN GENERAL, KETTANEH FELT THAT U.N. BECOMING

LESS RELEVANT TO MAJOR PROBLEMS. WHILE APPRECIATING FACT THAT LESS CONFRONTATIONAL ATMOSPHERE PREVAILED THAN AT PREVIOUS SESSIONS, HE DEPLORED BOTH WESTERN RIGIDITY AND FRUITLESS THIRD WORLD EFFORTS TO REPEATEDLY PUSH THROUGH RESOLUTIONS WHICH HAD NO PRACTICAL EFFECT. KETTANEH SPOKE FROM PERSPECTIVE OF A FORMER HIGH LEVEL OFFICIAL IN U.N. SECRETARIAT WHO WOULD GENUINELY LIKE TO SEE U.N. PLAY MORE EFFECTIVE ROLE. HE APPLAUDED AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S APPROACH AND NOTED THAT APPARENT EXISTENCE OF NEW OPTIONS IN AFRICA RESULTED IN THIRD WORLD WILLINGNESS NOT TO PUSH HARDLINE RESOLUTIONS. HE ACKNOWLEDGED OUR POINT THAT GROUP OF 77 TENDED TO COALESCE AROUND MOST RADICAL POSITION OF ITS MEMBERSHIP BUT SAID THIS WOULD BE TRUE AS LONG AS INACTION OF BIG POWERS AND INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD LEFT NO PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVES.

3. KETTANEH VOLUNTEERED HIS RELIEF AT SUBSIDIENCE OF KOREAN ISSUE ("WHEREEVER I TURNED AT PREVIOUS SESSIONS THERE WERE ALWAYS THREE KOREANS COMING AT ME,") BUT SAID WE COULD EXPECT CONTINUED DIFFERENCES WITH IRAQ ON OTHER SUBJECTS. REGARDING PUERTO RICO, HE NOTED THAT IRAQI POSITION IS DICTATED BY OVERALL FABRIC OF ITS INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. HE STRESSED THAT OVERRIDING IRAQI CONCERN CONTINUED TO BE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM AND FEAR OF ISRAELI EXPANSIONISM, NOTING THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS ISSUE COLORED APPROACH TO ALL ISSUES, NOT JUST THE MIDDLE EAST QUESTIONS.
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